

asks them to do so. Last year we had almost 80 Members.

Get ready to ride and have fun, but also help your own community with the serious side because cycling is important for recreation and exercising. It is a way for more children to be able to get to school on their own. It is an excellent transportation choice for communities for adults; and it is an excellent way, if we do our part, to make our communities more livable, more safe and economically secure.

TAX RELIEF THIS YEAR

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WELDON of Florida). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call the House's attention to the current debate about retroactive tax cuts for all American families. Some of my colleagues may have missed some important developments over the past few days that reflect what I believe, Mr. Speaker, is a major shift in the conventional wisdom about President Bush's tax cut proposal. Forgive me for being indelicate, Mr. Speaker, but everyone today seems to be singing the President's tune.

Mr. Speaker, first our Democratic colleagues said that the President's tax cut proposal was a risky scheme. My colleagues may remember last year that most of them voted against a tax cut that was just 70 percent of the total that they are now supporting as an alternative to the President's plan. They may not want us to remember their old position, Mr. Speaker, but the facts are plain. Their message on tax relief has definitely changed.

This weekend the President of the United States and even Senator KENT CONRAD both said, "We ought to act now on tax relief." The momentum in the political debate continues to move in the right direction, Mr. Speaker, namely toward larger, retroactive tax cuts this year. Even the toughest critics of tax relief said if you are going to use tax reductions as a method for economic stimulus, you must ask quickly to have any effect whatsoever. Tax cuts will be meaningless to this year's economy, Mr. Speaker, unless they take effect this year. Our faltering economy is not just about a jittery stock market. There is no need to beam up any one around here today. Everyone seems to agree with the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE) and I, tax relief is the new religion, Mr. Speaker; and everyone has caught it in Washington, D.C.

Finally, Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill and Alan Greenspan of the Federal Reserve have both said that America's economy is experiencing a crisis in consumer confidence. No other single thing that Congress could do this year will do more to improve consumer confidence than by providing tax relief

for every taxpayer that begins January 1 of this year.

Mr. Speaker, the idea of retroactive tax relief is an idea whose time has come. This Congress should act and act now.

MARCH 25 MARKS 90TH ANNIVERSARY OF TRAGIC TRIANGLE FIRE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, this past Sunday, March 25, came and went. March 25 is the 90th anniversary of the tragic Triangle fire, an event that changed the course of American history. On that day in 1911, a fire broke out at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company factory located on the top floors of the Asch Building on the corner of Greene Street and Washington Place in New York City.

The 575 workers who worked at the sewing machines had cans which collected the excess oil from the sewing machines. These cans were placed on top of boxes of lint. You can just imagine the picture now. A spark, an ignition, and the whole place went up, and 146 people out of the 475 that were working that day died. These people could not get out of the factory because the doors had been bolted. The doors had been locked by those who put profit ahead of worker safety. Times have changed, have they not?

Mr. Speaker, we argued on this floor in the last 2 years and 3 years about trade relations with other countries. I opposed those trade agreements that were not reciprocal but were one way, and we talked about the working conditions in other countries as not being up to what they should be; and yet here on our own mean streets of the United States of America, the greatest republic in the world, these factories still exist. Sweat labor still exists, and who speaks for those people, locked away for 12 and 16 hours? Who is here to talk about working conditions and what situations people have to go through to bring bread home to their families? Many times they are the new waves of immigrants, nowhere else to work, but in conditions that you and I would never accept.

Mr. Speaker, this fire is cited in the United States Almanac because it is the worst industrial fire in the history of the Nation. Business at the time was only concerned with the bottom line. Fire inspections and precautions were woefully inadequate. The Triangle factory had never conducted a fire drill. That building was supposed to be fireproof. There was no oversight and there certainly was no OSHA.

Mr. Speaker, we have all heard the debates of the past few weeks about protecting the workers. The employees were not in labor unions either, or just

a few of them. There was no one there to protect them or speak for them. They were exploited and abused; and while we talk about working conditions in Honduras, in China, and well we should, right here in major suburbs and cities of this country, we know that the Department of Labor knows best about what goes on behind those locked doors right in the heart of New York City.

Mr. Speaker, in the wake of this tragedy people throughout the Nation demanded restitution, justice, and action that would safeguard the vulnerable and the oppressed. There were massive protests by people angry at the lack of concern and the greed that made the Triangle fire possible. As a direct result of that horrible tragedy, there was a substantial effort to alleviate the most dangerous aspects of sweatshop manufacturing in New York and throughout the Nation.

Mr. Speaker, on February 17, 2001, not too long ago, the last survivor of that factory blaze, Rose Freedman, passed away at 107 years of age. It is important that we not let the memory of the Triangle fire be extinguished from our memories. It is important that the workers of America, be they on farms, be they in factories, or be they in electronic cubicles, stand up and speak out when they see things that are unsafe. The courts will protect them; and if the courts do not, we will.

Mr. Speaker, this past Sunday, March 25th, came and went. March 25 was the 90th anniversary of the tragic Triangle Fire, an event that changed the course of American history. On that day in 1911, a fire broke out at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company factory, located on the top floors of the Asch Building on the corner of Greene Street and Washington Place in New York City.

The fire swept through the top 3 stories of the building in only 1/2 hour. When the fire ended, 146 of the 575 Triangle factory employees had died. Not all died in the fire. Many jumped to their deaths from the 8th, 9th, and 10th floors rather than face the flames.

It is cited in the U.S. Almanac because it is the worst industrial fire in the history of American industry.

Most of the Triangle factory workers were women. Most of the workers were recent European, Jewish or Italian immigrants, some as young as 11 years old. These women had come to the United States with their families to seek a better life.

But the harsh realities of working in a sweatshop was their reality.

Business at the time was only concerned with the bottom line. Fire inspections and precautions were woefully inadequate.

The Triangle factory had never conducted a fire drill and had locked doors, poor sanitation, and crowding. There was no oversight. There certainly was no OSHA. Most of the employees were not in labor unions. There was no one there to protect them from being exploited and abused.

However, in the wake of this tragedy, people throughout the nation demanded restitution, justice, and action that would safeguard the vulnerable and oppressed. It is unfortunate that it took events such as the Triangle Fire to

demand change. There were massive protests by people angry at the lack of concern and the greed that had made the Triangle fire possible.

As a direct result of this horrible fire, there was a substantial effort to alleviate the most dangerous aspects of sweatshop manufacturing in New York and throughout the nation.

On February 17, 2001, the last survivor of the factory blaze, Rose Freedman, passed away at the age of 107.

It is important that we not let the memory of the Triangle Fire be extinguished from our memories.

It is for this reason that I have introduced House Concurrent Resolution 81 with my friend from New York, Mr. KING. This resolution recognizes the occasion of the 90th anniversary of the Triangle Fire.

In my mind, this resolution is very simple and very straightforward. I taught my students about the fire in just this manner when I taught history class. But apparently, for reasons that escape me, it is just too controversial for today. And that is a shame.

In 1911, the Triangle Fire brought attention to the many serious problems facing factory employees and paved the way for worker protection laws.

In the year 2001, we cannot even recognize the memory of the fire and its victims on the House floor. But even worse than not considering a simple, non-binding resolution, is that we are letting history repeat itself.

The truth is that young workers around the world are dying needlessly in burning factories for the same reasons that the women died in the Triangle Fire.

Meeting the bottom line is apparently worth the cost of inhuman conditions. We are repeating the same mistakes that the U.S. remedied decades ago. And although we have standards to protect American workers, our trade agreements lack teeth and do not even mention labor rights. By ignoring international workers rights abuses, we are not only allowing, but assisting in the mistreatment of millions of workers in sweatshops around the globe.

It is our own fault that nothing has changed.

This global economy that we support, apparently without question or reservation, is allowing countries to fight for commerce by allowing the lowest standards. And if this standard allows for a factory to lock its doors, while children work for twelve-hour days to make children's toys at the lowest cost possible, so be it.

And if there is a 1993 fire at a factory in Bangkok which kills 188 workers, eerily similar to the Triangle Fire, then the company can just move its business to another location and re-set up shop—no questions asked. No sanctions imposed.

As William Greider points out in his introduction to the book, *The Triangle Fire*, "the passivity of government and the public simply leads further down a low road. More injustices appear, and they, too, must be tolerated in the name of commerce."

"In the name of commerce."

It is "in the name of commerce" that international laws will not produce reasonable standards for business performance.

It is in the name of competitive advantage, that instead of improving working conditions, countries are trying to out do each other with the lowest standards to attract our commerce.

Changing the attitude of all Americans is not easy, but it is the right thing to do. Everyone should be outraged by sweatshops. But they should be just as outraged that we in the United States are enabling the sweatshops to continue.

I urge my colleagues to cosponsor House Concurrent Resolution 81, and remember the Triangle Fire. Remember what it did for our country. Honor the victims of the fire.

And recognize the ability of progressive thinking organizations, with the help of businesses groups and government support, to change the lives of people for the better.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 46 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BASS) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Lord God, how different history would be if long ago people had taken Your holy word seriously: "Make justice your aim." Each day would be filled with promise and hope if all of us upon rising would make justice our aim. Without blaming anyone or without seeking applause, each day would lead to changing the world, if justice alone were our aim.

Justice itself would give balance to our daily routine, breathe contentment into our souls and set us free. Justice toward others would create a mutuality with every other person that would be fair, take us beyond expectation and codependency until we found trust and security.

Lord, if we as a people and as a Nation were to make justice our aim, how would this change our priorities? Could we change that much? In every age You alone, Lord God, take people beyond their wishful thinking and beyond themselves. You alone bring about lasting and true justice.

So, Lord God, in us and through us make justice Your aim now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker pro tempore's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Chair's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Texas (Mr. RODRIGUEZ) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

SUNDRY MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Sundry messages in writing from the President of the United States were communicated to the House by Ms. Wanda Evans, one of his secretaries.

MARRIAGE TAX PENALTY REPEAL

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, later this week, we will again vote to remove the marriage penalty from our Tax Code, and this time we have a President who will sign the bill.

Eighty-five percent of the American people want us to do this, and with good reason. Forty percent of all first marriages end in divorce, single-parent families have increased 248 percent since 1960, and the percentage of children born out of wedlock has gone from 10 to 33 percent during the same period. Mr. Speaker, we need to strengthen families in this country.

The Tax Code is not the only reason this has happened. For 30 years we had a welfare system that tore families apart. Fortunately, a Republican Congress reformed that system. We still spend \$1,000 supporting single-parent families for every \$1 we spend encouraging couples to marry and stay together.

Clearly, we have a lot of work to do to strengthen marriages in America. This week we will have a chance to change the Tax Code that penalizes couples for getting married in the first place. I urge all my colleagues to support this very important bill.

PASS FLAT SALES TAX AND ABOLISH IRS

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to address the House